

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 6-8 and 12-14 are now pending in the application, with Claim 1 being the sole independent claim. Claims 9 and 10 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claim 1 has been amended and Claims 12-14 are newly-presented herein.

The drawings were objected to as allegedly not showing every feature of the invention specified in the claims. In particular, the Examiner questions support in the drawings for the “guide member”. The “guide member” is no longer recited in the claims. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is requested.

Claims 1-4, 6, 8 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 3-84837 (Haneda et al.). Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Haneda et al. in view of Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 7-181815 (Kumon et al.). Claim 9 was rejected under § 103 as being unpatentable over Haneda et al. in view of Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 3-271754 (Morita et al.). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As recited in independent Claim 1, the present invention relates to an image forming apparatus including an image forming unit, an intermediate transfer member, recording material conveying means, transfer means, a fixing unit, a first openable portion and a second openable portion. The image forming unit has an image bearing member and is capable of being detachably attached to a main body of the image forming apparatus. The intermediate transfer member is disposed at an upper position relative to the image forming unit, and to which the image on the image bearing member is transferred. The recording material conveying means conveys a recording material along a conveyance route. The transfer means transfers the image on the intermediate transfer member onto the recording material conveyed by the recording material conveying means. The fixing unit has a fixing member for fixing a toner image on the recording material and a pressing member for contacting with and pressing the recording material. The first openable portion is disposed on a side surface of the main body and is openable to expose the conveyance route. The second openable portion is disposed on an upper face of the main body, is capable of being opened in case of inserting the image forming unit into the main body in a state that the first openable portion is closed and of being opened separately from the fixing unit, and holds the intermediate transfer member.

With the above arrangement, interference of the second openable portion with an opening operation of a side face of the main body can be prevented. In addition, because the second openable portion is capable of being opened separately from the fixing unit, that openable portion is lighter and less likely to be closed by its own weight.

In the embodiment of Figure 4 of Haneda et al., the image forming device includes an upper casing 130 and a lower casing 140. The lower casing includes an openable side panel 140A and an image forming section 110A-110D is provided in the lower casing. In Figure 4, it appears that upper casing 130 is movable relative to lower casing 140. A fixing section 116 is provided in upper casing 130.

The upper casing 130 in Haneda et al. would more closely correspond to the second openable portion of Claim 1 because the second openable portion is described as being disposed on an upper face of the main body. Haneda et al. does not disclose or suggest at least that the second openable portion is capable of being opened separately from the fixing unit, as is recited in independent Claim 1.

Thus, Haneda et al. fails to disclose or suggest important features of the present invention as recited in independent Claim 1.

Morita et al. is directed to a color image forming device having two pivoting members. The Office Action construes reference numeral 18 as being the fixing means.

However, this member moves together with the portion disposed on the upper face of the main body. Accordingly, Morita et al. fails to remedy the deficiencies of Haneda et al. noted above with respect to independent Claim 1.

Kumon et al. has also been reviewed, but is not believed to be any more relevant than the citations discussed above.

Thus, independent Claim 1 is patentable over the citations of record. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the §§ 102 and 103 rejections are respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claim 1. Dependent Claims 2-4, 6-8 and 12-14 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in independent Claim 1. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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